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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

Edited by GHULAM FARID MALIK, M.A.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

A MIRACLE OF ISLAM

A Quartet of Truths

(By Seth Abdullah Allahdin)

As is evident from numerous verses in the Holy Quran, God has caused Divine Teachers and messengers to appear from time to time in every nation, age, and clime. The advent of the inspired Teacher is the highest conceivable blessing of God—a blessing which He has never withheld from any people or country; for being the All-creating and All-sustaining God of the universe, He must provide as much for the spiritual as He does for the physical needs of His human creatures everywhere. Further, the very end and aim of man's life here below is to attain spiritual growth and advancement, ending ultimately in a perfect union with God; and to the fulfilment of this purpose the appearance of an inspired Teacher is indispensably necessary. This is the reason that, prior to the coming of Islam as the one universal religion for all mankind, there was not a religion or creed but its

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Hazrat Ahmad was, no doubt, the reformer for this age, but they will not acknowledge him as *the Messiah and Prophet* whose advent had been foretold and promised for these days. But to acknowledge him as a reformer and reject him as *the Promised Messiah and Prophet* for the age is a contradiction in terms. For to allow a man to be a divinely-raised reformer is to admit him as being an eminently righteous and truthful man, while to repudiate him as the Messiah and Prophet is to declare him to be a liar and an impostor —two utterly inconsistent things. If he is the spiritual reformer for this age, he is necessarily also the Promised Messiah and Prophet of the day. His claims must be accepted in their entirety: you cannot half believe and half disbelieve in him. He is in very truth the Messenger of God for this century, and it is up to every Muslim to accept him, without being swayed by any unreasonable prejudice against him. He who does not do so, and persists in rejecting him, is bound to fall under divine displeasure.

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THE DAWN OF HUMAN LIBERTY

(By Syed Zain-ul-Abideen Wali Ullah Shah)

III

The distinctive mark of our age is that the power of subjugation with which man is endowed has expressed itself to its fullest extent. On the other hand there is an intense waiting for the Promised One who alone can rouse to expression that other side of man which is expressive of his relation to God, and on which alone can be founded the Kingdom of Heaven. The distinctive mark of the age which saw the advent of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (on whom be peace) was that the subjugation of man by man had brought about a tragic state of affairs. In fact whatever chains had ever been forged in that age had been put round the necks of ordinary men in order to kill their instincts of freedom. Human institutions and customs destructive of human freedom itself ruled the day. It is no use trying to detail them. There were hundreds of them and they were together consuming the freedom of man. The age of our Holy Prophet was an age in which man was bound in the worst chains of slavery. It was not one God who ruled, but thousands of gods who compelled submission from man. The moon and the sun, the stars in the heavens, the clouds, thunder and lightning were one and all gods, obeisance to which man considered his obvious duty. He bowed himself before them without question or regret and asked for protection against evil. The winds were also endowed with divine power. The slightest gust of wind made man

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shudder. The rivers and mountains, leaves of trees, and stones were one and all gods, whose wrath and whose displeasure man was anxious to avoid by propitiation and flattery. The firmament on high was all peopled by gods whom man tried to please by offerings. Even man's own thoughts and his environments appeared as gods worthy of man's worship.

The worst god of those days was man himself, whose uncompassionate and unfeeling nature had bound his fellow-men in the worst of chains. Many there were who struck with horror at the sight of man in bondage to fellow-man, marvelled at "what man has made of man." The being who was the best of creatures and who was destined to subjugate all nature was himself subjugated by members of his own species. The age of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) presented the darkest picture of the bondage of man. A single man would own thousands of human slaves. And while men take pity on a tortured animal, it seemed that the owners of these slaves had no pity for them. But it never occurred to them that while they exacted unremitting toil from them, the slaves were subject to the same pain and fatigue to which any human being is subject, as the Holy Quran has said:

> They were as cattle, nay even worse.—(7 : 179.)

Before the Prophet's Time

If you want to read the most heart-rending accounts of human slavery, study the conditions which prevailed before the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) and continued to prevail until his advent. You will then find what

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man had done to his fellow-man, and what a blessing to mankind the Holy Prophet proved. At a time when man was bound by the worst chains forged by his fellow-man and the whole of mankind waited intensely for their Saviour, exactly as they are waiting for one to-day, and at whose hands the Kingdom of Heaven was to have been fulfilled, at that time the God of the heavens and the earth addressed the whole of the human race through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) in the following words :—

> Those who follow the Apostle-prophet, the *Ummi*, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burdens and the shackles which were upon them ; so as for those who believe in him and honour him and help him and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that shall prosper.—(7 : 157.)

In short the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) was the Prophet, a prophecy about whom was to be found in the Old Testament, and who was to have founded a new law and was to have moved men to obey it.

Almighty God goes on in the same passage to address Muhammad, His Prophet, in the following words :—

> Say, O people ! I am the Apostle of God to you all, of Him Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, there is no God but He ; He brings life and causes to die, therefore believe in God and His Apostle, the *Ummi* Prophet who believes in God and His words and follow him so that you may walk in the right way.—(7 : 158.)

In short the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the fulfilment of the old prophecy which said that the

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Promised One was to be an embodiment of the best human qualities, and was to have gathered all the nations of the earth under one religion. It was through this Prophet that the Almighty God promised the freedom of man and taught man not to try and enslave his fellow-man. Thus we read in the Holy Quran :

> And on the day when He shall gather them altogether and say, O Assembly of Jinn you took away a great part of men. And their friends from amongst the men shall say : O Lord some of us profited by others and we have reached our appointed term which Thou didst appoint for us. He shall say : the fire is your abode, to abide in it except as God is pleased ; thy Lord is wise, knowing. And thus we make some of the iniquitous to befriend others on account of what they earn. (6 : 129-130).

The oppressors of man, the Quran claims, had reached their appointed terms. This only means that in their oppression and exploitation, the rulers of men had reached their utmost limits and the time had now come for them to stop this process of exploitation.

The Rulers and the Ruled

The Quran also claims that for the curse of slavery, slaves have only to thank themselves. They first threw off the yoke of the one God and thus proved unjust to themselves; and those who are unjust to themselves have only unjust rulers appointed upon them. Jinn and men are only two sections of creation. The section of the rulers is given the name of the 'Jinn', while the section of the ruled is given the name of 'men'. This interpretation of the meaning of the Quranic terms is clear from the words :

> And thus do We make some of the unjust submit to others on account of their own doings.—(6 : 130).

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This verse shows that those who have been spoken of as Jinn in the earlier part of the passage belong to that section of mankind who have been unjust. The Holy Quran also says that those who set up other gods than the one God are of the unjust. This only means that to turn away from the one and only God and to address another one as though he or it were God is to be unjust to oneself in the extreme. The heart of the man is the throne of God and the only one who deserves to be the ruler of man is his Creator and to turn away from Him is to perpetrate iniquity and injustice of the worst sort. Wherever in the Holy Quran we find 'the unjust' mentioned without any further qualifications we are bound to take the term to stand for those who were set up to be equal with the one and the only God. In short, the Quranic passage under discussion means that a section of mankind turned away from God, and having proved unjust to themselves, they had unjust rulers appointed over them.

You can well ask yourself the question whether if a man who attaches himself to God and looks up to no one as his master except Him and affirms his subordination only towards Him, then does he require any further discipline, or any more force to keep himself within bounds and always on the straight path? You will one and all say, no. When a man strengthens his attachment to God, he releases himself forthwith from all bondage to his fellow-man. The physical force of the State is required only when he cuts asunder the knot of subordination to God, becomes a rebel and begins to trespass on others' rights. Thus, as the Holy Quran says, the unjust have only unjust rulers appointed over them. Let us remember that the ruling class has always been described as being unjust. This is because, on seeing man rebel against God, they do not

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turn to finding out the cause and the remedy of his rebellion; instead of that they try to establish their own rule over him, and forget that the only one who deserves to rule him is man's Creator. The ruling class has put the worst possible chains on the ruled. As the Holy Quran says :

> And persons from amongst men used to seek refuge with persons from amongst the Jinn, so they increased in wrong doings.—(72 : 6).

Those amongst men who willingly submitted to the rule of their fellow-men had their reward in being involved in further and worse sinfulness. Their tendency to wrong and rebel continued—rather it increased—in spite of the rule by physical force established over them. In this connection also the word Jinn stands for the ruling class. As a matter of fact this word has been used in the Arabic language in a very wide sense. When the word passed into our language it acquired a somewhat narrow sense. In ancient times, the Arabs used this word to describe the leaders or the ruling class of a community, much as they used the word ملائکہ (angels) to describe all kinds of invisible forces whether of good or of evil. Thus the word جنان الجبال (the Jinn of the mountains) stood for those marauders who came down from the mountains and attacked those who lived on the plains. To be sure in one or two places the Holy Quran has used the word for angels as well as for creatures made out of fire ; also for those beings who lived on the earth before the emergence of man; but in all other places the word Jinn has been contrasted with the word انس (man) and when so contrasted the word always means the ruling class. The use by the Holy Quran of the word Jinn in this sense is so extensive that we can affirm it with the greatest possible certainty that it

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is an accepted term of the Holy Book and whenever it is used along with its correlate انس (*Ins*) it always means the ruling class and انس (*Ins*) means the ruled class of mankind. To take another example in the chapter called " The Elevated Places " we read :

> O ! children of Adam if there came to you an apostle from amongst you relating to you My communications then whoever shall guard (against evil) and act rightly they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. And those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily—these are the inmates of the fire, they shall abide in it. Who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against God or rejects His communications ? (As for) these their portion of the book shall reach them, only, when Our messengers come to them, causing them to die, they shall say " where is that which you called upon besides God ". They would say " They are lost to us " and they shall bear witness against themselves that they were unbelievers. He will say ; " enter into fire amongst the nations that have passed away before you from amongst Jinn and men " ; whenever a nation shall enter it, the last of them shall say to the first of them ; Our Lord these led us astray, therefore give them a double chastisement of the fire. He will say : every one shall have double but you do not know. And the first of them shall say to the last of them : you have no preference over us ; therefore taste the chastisement for what you have earned.—(7 : 35—39).

In this passage the two sections of mankind, the rulers and the ruled, have been called Jinn and men, also the men are made to complain against the Jinn and say that the latter led the former astray. God regards both as being equally to blame and prescribes a double chastisement.

The same point is stressed by the Holy Quran in the chapter called " The Allies ". "God has cursed the unbelievers and has prepared for them a burning fire, wherein they will abide for a long time and without finding a protector or a helper. On the day when their faces are to be turned back into fire, they shall say : " O ! would that we had obeyed God and obeyed

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His Apostle;" and they shall say: "O! our Lord we obeyed our leaders and our great men, they so led us astray from the path: O! our Lord give them a double chastisement and curse them with a great curse." (33:64—68).

Call to Liberty

This passage from the chapter called "The Allies" has much the same significance as the passage from the chapter called "Elevated Places" which is discussed above. The only difference between the two passages is that in the former the two sections of mankind are given the names of Jinn and men, and an interlocution between them is presented, while in the latter the two sections of mankind are frankly called 'leaders' and 'the led'. The division which the Holy Quran makes of the whole of mankind between the rulers and the ruled is therefore obvious. As we reflect upon the meaning hidden in these passages it becomes increasingly clear to us that wherever the Holy Quran has mentioned Jinn and men together, the intention is not to contrast men with another set of creatures, possibly intangible or immaterial, but to contrast ordinary men with that section of men which rules over them and exploits them. In the chapter "Elevated Places" too we find a discussion about the children of Adam and the covenant with God, which as it were is regarded as a sacred trust in the very constitution of their nature and which was designed by God as a means to raise mankind to a great spiritual height. In the same chapter we are told how man chose instead to follow the way of his own impulses and instead of rising to spiritual heights lowered himself to the level of ordinary earth and thus incurred

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a terrible loss. We have an aweful description of this in the Holy Quran, which fills us with shame and regret when we read it, particularly :

> And certainly We have created for hell many of the Jinn and the men, they have hearts with which they do not understand ; and they have eyes with which they do not see and they have ears with which they do not hear ; they are as cattle, nay they are in worse error. They are heedless ones ". (7 : 179).

After giving you an idea of the extent to which mankind had been enslaved at the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) I told you that God addressed the ruling class of mankind through the Holy Prophet in the following words :—

> " O ! you who make up the class of Jinn, you have reached your limits. Stop your exploitation of man for you have had enough of it ". (6 : 129).

This verse is in fact a compact expression of the call to liberty which the Holy Prophet issued and by means of which he invited the whole of mankind to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven foretold by the Prophets. We go on to read next the reply of the friends of the ruling class from among men : " O Lord ! some of us profited by others." This reply shows that at the time of the Holy Prophet man was in a most pitiable plight because he had surrendered all his means of living to his rulers and had come to think that it was for the rulers to give or not to give to others the right to live. The chains of slavery had become for them an accomplished fact and they no longer wanted to become free. The reply of these friends goes on to state : " And we have reached our appointed term which Thou didst appoint for us." This shows that the advent of the Holy Prophet was to mark the beginning of the period during which the end of the

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followers every now and then found themselves blessed with the appearance of an Apostle from God among them.

Physical Law Corresponds to Spiritual Law

As in the physical world day and night are to be seen to follow each other in a regular succession, so likewise in the spiritual world periods of light alternate with periods of darkness with an equally unfailing regularity. The spiritual sun appears periodically on the horizon and dispels the gloom from the hearts and souls of mankind, illumines them with its revivifying light, and animates them with fresh life and vigour. Thus, by virtue of His being the Provident God of the whole universe, He provides for man's moral and spiritual growth hand in hand with his physical growth. It is from a failure to understand the attribute of all-embracing providence of God that men have generally not only rejected the claims of a divine reformer, whenever and wherever one has made his appearance among them, but have even held him up to ridicule. So much of a rule would this, indeed, appear to have always been with people in general the world over that God says in the Holy Quran :

" Alas ! never has an Apostle from Us appeared among men but they have invariably repudiated and ridiculed him."

A Universal Religion

The system of a separate inspired Teacher for every individual community of mankind continued to be in vogue for thousands of years. At last, in order to weld up the whole human race into one brotherhood, and to beat down all barriers of race and colour,

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Satanic power had been decreed by God. Have you not read in the Holy Quran and the other heavenly books that Satan was to have a free field for a determinate period of time. It was for only a period that he was to have harnessed mankind and to have exploited them for his own ends. Thus we read in the Holy Quran :

> If thou shouldst respite me to the day of resurrection, I will most certainly cause his progeny to perish except a few. He said: be gone! for whoever of them will follow *you*, then surely hell is your recompence, a full recompence. And attack whomsoever of them *you can* with *your* voice, and collect against them *your* forces riding and on foot, and share with them in wealth of children and hold out promises to them; and devil makes not promises to them but to deceive: Surely (as for) My servants *you have* no authority over them; and your Lord is sufficient as Protector. (17 : 62).

In short it appears from the Holy Quran that man who had been endowed with the power to subjugate the rest of nature and had been himself ordained to live under the rule of one God, was destined for a definite period of time to live under the rule of the Satanic powers, who would continue for a time to *enforce* obeisance from him with all the physical force at their disposal. This period of the domination of man by Satan was to have ended with the advent of the Holy Prophet, who was to have inaugurated the era of human liberty. The Holy Prophet has said of himself : انا الحاشر الذي يحشر الناس على قدمي

> *i.e.*, I am that Prophet through whom the resurrection of mankind is to come about.

The significance of this resurrection is to be found in the passage which has already been quoted and discussed (6:129). At the time of the Holy Prophet the children of Adam had sunk to the lowest depths of degradation. And just as the degradation was great, so great also was

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the provision which God had made to cure this degradation. God sent His last Saviour in fulfilment of the old prophecies. It was this Saviour of whom it has been said that when he would come the earth would be levelled, the depressions removed and a straight highway prepared. "The spirit of truth when he comes will show the way of truth. He will establish righteousness and justice because the chief of the world had been wronged."

Who was this chief who had been wronged? It was no other than man, who being the best of creatures had still been enslaved and chained and the means of whose liberation were provided by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace).

He prepared a straight highway in the desert of Arabia, the highway which leads to human liberty, which reveals the true status of man, and which establishes the divine nature on the pattern of which man was created. The Holy Prophet Muhammad liberated man from the domination both of his fellow-man and of Satan. To free man from the poison of sin and the yoke of human rule, and to attach him and his heart in obedience to his true Creator, he founded a school. The teaching which this school imparts, is given loudly from the minarets of the mosques and it is in them that the secret of human life lies hidden.

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*HOW A WESTERNER LOOKS AT ISLAM

As regards the great religion which with we are dealing to-day, I have adopted the term "Muhammadanism" in order to limit this address to the creed as now professed by Muhammadans. If I had used the better heading "Islam," which means the creed of "resignation to the Divine will," a more extensive treatment would have been necessary than can be afforded in the course of an hour.

Muhammadanism is not the religion of the Prophet Muhammad, because he only professed to preach the religion of his predecessors, the Jews and the Christians; both these faiths being in the faith of "Islam," of which the form preached by Muhammad is the perfection and seal.

"To walk with God," to have God with us in our daily life with the object of obtaining the "peace that passeth all understanding," to submit to the Divine will"—this we, too, profess to seek; but in Muhammadanism this profession is translated into practice, and is the corner-stone of the edifice of that faith.

In one sense Muhammadanism is like, and in another sense unlike, both Judaism and Christianity. To walk with God, to have God ever present in all our acts, is no doubt what the prophets of these religions taught; and in the sense they were all Muhammadans, or rather "Muslims"—namely, professors of the faith of "Islam."

The Holy Prophet was Inspired

But so far as I know anything either of Judaism or of Christianity, the system preached by Muhammad was not merely imitative or electic; it was also "inspired"—if there be such a process as inspiration from the

* Address given by the late Dr. G. W. Leitner, M.A., LL.D., Ph.D. D.O.L., in London at a time when the entire atmosphere in the West, especially in England was saturated with hatred and animosity against Islam. What a great distance Islam has traversed since then in having that hatred replaced by appreciation and sympathetic understanding of its teachings and institutions.—*Ed.*

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source of all goodness. Indeed, I venture to state in all humility that if self-sacrifice, honesty of purpose, unswerving belief in one's mission, a marvellous insight into existing wrong or error, and the perception and use of the best means for its removal, are among the outward and visible signs of inspiration, the mission of Muhammad was "inspired."

The Judaism known to Muhammad was chiefly the traditional "Masora" as distinguished from the "Markaba"; indeed, pure Judaism as distinct from Buddhistic or Alexandrian importations into it.

The Christianity also which Muhammad desired to restore to its purity was the preaching of Christ, as distinguished on the one part from the mystic creed of St. Paul, and the outrageous errors of certain Christian sects known to the Arabs.

The idea of Muhammad not to limit the benefits of Abraham's religion to his own people, but to extend them to the world, has thus become the means of converting to a high form of culture and of civilization millions of the human race, who would either otherwise have remained sunk in barbarism, or would not have been raised to that brotherhood which "Islam" not only preaches but also practises.

The Sermon on the Mount Translated into Daily Life

The Founder of Muhammadanism has been talked of by Christians in the most unworthy manner. Still, at first, he was regarded as a quasi-Christian sectarian. Dante refers to Muhammad as an heretic in his "Inferno"; and, indeed in another sense, he was only a dissenter from one of the many forms which have adopted the appellation of "Christian." Some authors alleged that his religion was taken from the Talmud; but it seems to me that the question of what Muhammadanism really is cannot be summed up better than in stating it to be pure Judaism plus proselytism, and original Christianity minus the teaching of St. Paul. This as regards its theory; in practice it is far more than modern Chistianity in its artificial European aspect—the "Sermon on the Mount" translated into daily life.

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Every Muhammadan A Church in Himself

Every Muhammadan is a church in himself; every one is allowed to give an opinion on a religious matter, on the basis of the belief common to his co-religionists. They are not slaves to priests, they pray to God without an intermediary, and their place of worship is wherever they happen to be at the appointed hours of prayers.

Their preachers can also follow other vocations; some of them are shoemakers, etc. But, of course, the bulk of their ministers of religion are so by profession in regulated communities. There is no such thing as a Pope among them.

Any ordinary Muhammadan may say "By resigning myself to the Divine Will I am myself the representative of the faith of which the Prophet Muhammad was the exponent."

Muhammad himself did not make any claim to infallibility. On one occasion he had a revelation censuring himself severely for having turned away from a beggar in order to speak to an illustrious man of the commonwealth, and he published this revelation, the very last thing which he would have done had he been an impostor, as ignorant Christians call the great Arab Prophet.

Five Pillars of Islam

With regard to the outward signs of a Muhammadan, such as prayer, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage, the religious books contain the necessary instructions. As for prayer, they practically enforce that "cleanliness is next to Godliness," for ablutions precede prayer. The regulations regarding both acts are minute. Their alms, which are rightly called only a pecuniary prayer, consist in giving up a portion, not less than a fortieth part, or 2½ per cent., of their goods to the poor. These alms go into the public treasury, and are applied, among other things, to the redemption of slaves, another subject regarding which Christians ignorantly accuse Muhammadans of a state of things which Muhammad did his best successfully to mitigate by a practical legislation towards its eventual abolition.

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But, reverting to alms, in order that these be acceptable to God, the givers must show that they are in lawful possession of the gift (which, it is needless to add, can be increased beyond the legal minimum). It would not do "to rob a till in order to build a chapel," but those who voluntarily give more than the fortieth part will be rewarded by God.

The pilgrimage to Mecca is of great importance, as Muhammadans meet there from all parts of the world; it is a bond of union, and creates a real visible Muhammadan Church, such as the Christian world, with its innumerable subdivisions, does not yet possess for the assembly of an entire Christianity; it is, moreover, a great stimulus for the diffusion of culture by means of a common sacred language, the Arabic, in the same way as was the case in Europe when Latin was the one language spoken by all learned persons in addition to their native tongue. Thus by knowing Arabic one has a key not only to the Muhammadan religion, but also to the heart of the whole Muhammadan world. In Asia, and even Africa, in spite of the so-called semi-barbarism, any abstract Arabic word can become the common property of all the Arabic-speaking or Arabic-revering nations, and Muhammadanism thus possesses an agency of civilization and culture which is denied to other faiths.

Fasting is, of course a mere discipline, but it is also of great hygienic value. "The fulfilment of the duties of purity and cleanliness, which are rational, also fulfil the hygienic requirements of the physician."

Indeed, as regards Muhammadan rules generally regarding abstention from wine, pork, improperly slaughtered flesh, the disposal of what would be injurious if not quickly made away with, etc., it may safely be asserted that they were not laid down to worry those who fulfil them, but to benefit them in body and mind.

Muslim Charity and Equality

With regard to social gradations, the rich man is considered to be the natural protector of the poor, and the poor man takes his place at the table of the

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rich. Nowhere in Muhammadan society is there any invidious distinction between rich and poor; and even a Muhammadan slave is not only a member of the household, but has also far greater chances of rising to a position in the Government or in society than an English pauper.

Food is given to anyone who needs it, and charity is administered direct, and not by the circuitous means of a Poor Law system. Indeed, from the Muhammadan, as also from the Buddhistic point of view, the giving of charity puts the giver into a state of obligation to the receiver, since it enables the former to cultivate his sense of benevolence.

In a mosque there is perfect equality among worshippers; there are no pews; the "Imam" of the place or any other worshipper may lead the prayers, and nothing can be a more devotional sight than a crowd of Muslim worshippers going through their various genuflexions with perfect regularity and silence.

Englishmen object to formalism, but they often worship routine and the letter, rather than the spirit, of rules. Indeed, it may be said that English precision is at the root of a great deal of evil; and if charity in its widest sense is the greatest of virtues, the formalities that accompany its collection and distribution in this country destroy its very grace.

We do not seem to recognise that laws are laid down for general guidance, and that the letter of such laws is not to be the lord but the servant of our interpretation of them. Above all, our abstract charity, our abstract religion, our hard-and-fast rules are in contrast to the personal, individual, concrete, dramatic, allegorical, and imaginative which characterize the Eastern faiths and forms that have been adapted by us. There would be no Nihilists and no Socialists in Europe were Western society constituted on the basis of Muhammadanism; for in it a man is not taught to be dissatisfied, as is the great effort, aim, and result of our civilization.

Marriage in Islam

I would now draw your attention to marriage. The marriage contract requires the attestation of two

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witnesses, and constitutes a religious act; but it is not sacramental, as with Christians and Hindus.

The husband is to enjoy his wife's company, but he cannot force her to accompany him to another country; he is however, in the latter case, bound to maintain her.

When a connubial quarrel takes place arbitrators may be chosen, and divorce is allowed if the parties cannot remain together otherwise than in a state of enmity. Muhammadan legislation on the subject of marriage does not deserve the opprobrium that has been cast on it by Christian writers.

Divorce among Muslims Very Rare

The statement that among Muhammadans there exists the power of unlimited marriages along with unlimited power of divorce is not true. Divorce is not such an easy matter. It cannot be obtained without the judgment of arbitrators.

Besides, at marriage a certain dowry is named, which has to be paid to the wife in the event of divorce; and many women fix the amount in a sum far larger than the husband would ever be able to pay, in order to secure themselves against the danger of a divorce.

Among the Hindus marriage, being spiritual, cannot be dissolved, and among the Roman Catholics it can only be dissolved with the greatest difficulty; but whether the sacramental or the contract view of marriage be taken the union is, as a matter of fact, in the vast majority of cases, of a permanent nature in all countries and among all religions, though I grieve to have to admit that, having lived among Muhammadans from 1848, for nearly forty years, in spite of their "unlimited opportunity for divorce," I have known of more cases of divorce among Christians than among them. I have also no hesitation in affirming that in kindness to their family, to the learned or aged, to strangers, and to the brute creation, the bulk of Muhammadans are pattern to so-called Christians.

Polygamy

A few words may be said regarding the much-abused subject of Muhammadan polygamy. Apart

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from the fact that polygamy tends to provide for the surplus female population in the few places where there is such surplus, and that polygamy is a check on prostitution and its attendant evils, as also a protection against illegitimacy of birth, it cannot be denied that the vast majority of Muhammadans have only one wife. This is largely due to the teachings of Muhammadanism.

Muhammad came into a state of society where to have a daughter was considered to be a misfortune, and where female children were sometimes buried alive. There was no limit to the number of women that a man could marry, and they were a part of the property divided among the heirs of a deceased person.

On the unlimited polygamy which produced this state of things Muhammad put a check; he directed that a man could only enter into the marriage contract with two, three, or four wives, if he could behave with equal justice and equal love to them all.

Unless he could do that he was only permitted to marry one wife. Now as, practically, no one can be, as a rule, equally fair and loving to two or more wives, the spirit of Muhammad's legislation is cleary in favour of monogamy.

He also raised woman from the condition of being a property to that of a proprietor, and he constituted her as the first "legal" sharer whose interests the Muhammadan law has to consult.

The allegation has been made against Muhammad that by his own example he justified profligacy.

Let this statement be examined. Fortunately, we are not dealing with a legendary individual, but with an historical person, whose almost every act and saying is recorded in the Hadis or collections of traditions, which, next to the Koran, form a rule of Muhammadan conduct. These "Acts of the Apostle" are subjected to the most stringent rules of criticism as to their authenticity, and unless the story of an act or saying of the Prophet can be traced to one of his own companions, it is thrown out of the order of traditions, which form the subject of critical investigation as to their actual occurrence adopted by Muhammadan commentators. We have certainly far less authority of a secular character for the sayings and doings of our

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Lord Jesus Christ. Well then on what authorities, good, bad, or doubtful, do the allegations of Muhammad 's profligacy rest ? I have no hesitation in affirming that, following every such story to its source, it will be found to be entirely unsubstantiated, and that on the contrary, to the very great credit of Muhammad, in spite of many temptations, he preserved the utmost chastity in a state of society which did not practice that virtue.

Living among heathen Arabs, he remained perfectly chaste till, at the age of twenty-five, he married a woman of forty (equivalent to one of fifty in Europe); and he married her because she was his benefactor and believed in his sacred mission. As he stated years after her death to a young and a beautiful wife, who was "only jealous of the old and dead Khadija," in answer to her question, "Am I not so good as she?" "No you are not so good; for she believed in me when no one else did, she was my first disciple, and she honoured and protected me when I was poor and forsaken."

During the whole period of his marriage with her, twenty-seven years, he remained absolutely faithful to her.

It is true that, at the age of fifty-five, we find him taking wife after wife; but is it not fair to assume that in the case of a man who had shown such a self-control till that age there may be reasons other than those assigned by Christian writers for his many marriages ? What are these reasons ?

I believe that the real cause of his many marriages at an old age was charity, and in order to protect the widows of his persecuted followers.

Persecution was great against his followers, "the believers in one God." At one time no one was allowed to give them food, and some of them were obliged to escape to Abyssinia in order to seek a refuge with the Christian king of that land. The king did not give them up to their persecutors. Some of them died in Abyssinia; and their widows, who would otherwise have perished, Muhammad took into his household. The idea that the Prophet had any improper intention in so doing is without foundation; especially if we consider that he had given abundant proof during his youth of con tinence. The story of the marriage of the Prophet

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God sent down for the entire humanity one common, perfect and universal religion—the religion of Islam. With the advent of Islam every previous religion ceased to be of practical use. God says in the Holy Quran:

"He who chooses to follow any religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him, and on the Day of Judgment he will find himself among the losers."

Hence we see that whereas prior to the coming of Islam with a universal message, a diversity of religious systems and creeds held sway in the world, and they were one and all marked by the periodical appearance of inspired Teachers, since Islam came all such Teachers have discontinued to appear in those religions. These religions no longer provide the means of spiritual life, growth and development to their followers as they did of yore. It is now only in Islam that this blessing exists, and only in Islam that divinely-raised Teachers make their appearance every now and then. Referring to this fact the Holy Prophet said: "The end of every hundred years shall be marked among the followers of Islam by the appearance of an inspired spiritual Guide who shall remove what errors of belief and practice might have crept among them with the passage of time." Accordingly, we find that, through God's grace and mercy, ever since Islam came into the world, the commencement of every new century has witnessed the appearance of a spiritual Teacher among the Muslims, and will continue to so witness to the end of the world.

This fact, which is an exclusive feature of Islam, constitutes an irrefutable proof of its divine origin and of its being the only true and living religion in the

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with Zainab, the divorced wife of his freedman and adopted son, Zeid, has also given rise to misconception. It may be premised that the heathen Arabs considered it wrong to marry the divorced wife of an adopted son, although they had no objection to marry the wives (excluding their own mother) of a deceased father, just as some people nowadays might not mind breaking the Decalogue who would on no account "whistle on a Sunday."

Muhammad excluded all this "nonsense" by saying that an adopted child was not a real child; and this being so, it could not be supposed to be within the prohibited degrees. To affirm this truth and not to justify a new marriage, the Prophet received a revelation, which has been misconstrued as a sanction to a wrongful act.

It really seems to me that if men cultivated something like true charity they would have a different view of other religions than they now hold, and that they would endeavour to learn about them from their original sources, instead of from the prejudiced second-hand reports of the opponents of these religions.

Celibacy is rare among Mussalmans, and there are very few, if any, marriageable women that are not married.

Adultery is punished equally both in man and woman. The culprit is flogged with a hundred stripes publicly.

The Muhammadans have no taverns, gaming houses, or brothels, nor have they any idea of legalising prostitution; and as regards their general conversation it is infinitely more decent, as a rule, than that of most Europeans. I have seen young Muhammadan fellows at school and college, and their conduct and talk are far better than in the case among English young men indeed, the talk of the latter is often such as would incur punishment in Muhammadan land.

The married woman is in a better legal position than the married Englishwoman, and she can give evidence in attestation of a birth, marriage, or death, which is still denied to a woman in Republican France.

Jihad Conditional

As regards the assumed immutability of the Muhammadan religion, there is a liberty of interpretation

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of the Koran which enables "Islam" to be adapted to every sect and country; *e.g.*, the law laid down for its interpretation that conditional sentence has to take precedence of an absolute one, is one that secures every reasonable liberty of conscience, *e.g.*, "fight the infidels" is an absolute sentence; "fight the infidels if they attack you first" is a conditional sentence, and has therefore first to be taken into account in determining the much misunderstood question of the "Holy war" or rather "Jihad," against infidels. Indeed, no such war is legitimate except in self-defence against those who persecute Muhammadans because they believe in one God and who turn them out from their homes; in other words, as in the case of the Muslim refugees to Abyssinia.

As for religious toleration, there is much more of it in practice among Muhammadans than has been the case, at any rate, in Christian countries; and had this not been the fact, the Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities would not have preserved their autonomy, religion, and language under, say, Turkish rule—a rule, I may add from personal knowledge—which offers many lessons of forbearance and humanity to Christian legislation.

Equal Protection of Mosques and Churches

In the chapter on "Pilgrimage" in the Koran, the object of a religious war is declared to be the protection of "mosques, synagogues, and churches," for in them alike "the name of God is frequently commemorated." Is not this as tolerant a position as we have only reached after centuries. I know many Muhammadans who have subscribed to churches; how many Christians have ever subscribed to mosques? Yet in them "the name of God" is indeed, commemorated.

I cannot conclude this address better than by insisting on the fact that the Jewish, Christian, and Muhammadan religions are sister-faiths, having a common origin; and by expressing a hope that the day will come when Christians will honour Christ more by also honouring Muhammad. There is a common ground between Muhammadanism and Christianity, and he is a better Christian who reveres the truths enunciated by the Prophet Muhammad.

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Rs. 3,00,000 THANKSGIVING FUND

On the second day of the Jalsa Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan made an important appeal for the collection of a fund of Rs. 3,00,000 for presentation to Amir-ul-Momineen Hazrat Khalifatulmasih on the occasion of the successful completion of the 25 years of his Khilafat in March 1939, as a token of the Jama'at's gratitude to Almighty God for the blessings and favours of the second regime of the Ahmadiyya Khilafat.

Sir Zafrullah Khan spoke in Urdu. The following is a short English rendering of his speech :—

Two years ago it occurred to me that just as, the successful working of a secular institution for a number of years is celebrated by some form of festivity or rejoicing, we too, on the successful completion, by our religious organisation, of a certain number of years, give some formal expression to our gratitude to God. That was when the Silver Jubilee of the late King George V, was being celebrated. Then followed other Jubilee celebrations, notably those of the Nizam and Sir Agha Khan. I thought to myself that a good king and an efficient government was no doubt a blessing, and good leaders given to a people were also a great boon, but the favour that had been given to us was the most valuable of all the favours given to anyone else in the world; we should, therefore, be thankful to God for it. It is now about 25 years since this favour was granted to us—namely, the regime of the second and present Khalifa. The second khilafat was instituted by God in 1914 and in March 1939 it will bave completed 25 years of its existence. I was led irresistably to think that it would be desirable on our part on this occasion to render an offering to God to mark our sense of thankfulness to the Almighty. In this connection I thought of a financial plan which I mentioned to

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some of my friends and invited them to take a prominent part in carrying the plan to fruition. The plan was that we should collect a fund of an amount never before collected by the Jama'at on one occasion, and that amount may be presented as a purse to Hazrat Amir-ul-Momineen in March 1939 or thereabout, on the occasion, say, of the Majlis-i-Mushawrat of that year, with the request that that humble offering being a token of our gratitude to God Almighty, might be used by Hazrat in any way he liked.

I have estimated this amount to be Rs. 3,00,000. I have divided this amount into two parts. Rs. 1,00,000 I wish to reserve to be subscribed by my friends. For the other Rs. 2,00,000 I wish to make a general appeal to the Jama'at. The first part of the fund was opened at once and the response from friends was very encouraging. Some of them wrote to me that they too had the idea in their minds that the expression of their gratitude for the second regime of the khilafat should take some concrete form, but that it had not occurred to them as to what form such expression should take. As all such appeals to the Jama'at must first be referred to the Amir-ul-Momineen I submitted my request to him who, accepting it, gave me permission to make an appeal to the Jama'at. I feel pride and pleasure in being fortunate to have the honour of placing this appeal before the Jama'at.

The first part of the appeal will be allowed to be shared in by those who promise a sum of Rs. 1,000 and make it up by instalments in a fixed period of time declared by themselves. They should then go on slowly subscribing to it till March 1939, for I know that there are also other financial obligations for the Jama'at to discharge, especially the *Tahrik* of Hazrat Amir-ul-Momineen, the demands of which it is the first

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duty of the Jama'at to fulfil. This is why I am making the appeal at the earliest opportunity so that the fund may be collected in easy instalments. Those who had joined the appeal at its inception have been making contribution for the last two years, and those who will join it now will have to redeem their promises within the fixed time. Promises to the amount of Rs. 85,000 have been received in regard to the first part of the appeal, and a part of the amount has already been subscribed and deposited in the Anjuman treasury, where I wished the subscriptions to be forwarded by contributors. I now only briefly make an appeal, with regard to the first part, that those who have been given the means by God to do it, may take it upon themselves to subscribe Rs. 1,000 each to the fund till March 1939 ; and with regard to the other part which relates to the collection of Rs. 2,00,000, that the Jama'at in realization of the great favours and blessings of God vouchsafed to it in the course of the 25 years of the present Khalifa, as a token of its loving regard, subscribe the amount by March 1939 in order that there might be a concrete expression of our thankfulness to God for such favours and blessings. There are undoubtedly other financial obligations which have to be met by the Jama'at. But in view of the fact that the Jama'at realises the value of these favours and by reason of the loving regard which it has for the Khilafat, it is not at all a difficult affair, if it responds to this appeal, to collect the amount within a period of 15 months. Those who make a promise should send their contributions to the Muhasib, Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Qadian, who will keep the accounts. Contributions may be made by individuals or by Jama'ats as Jama'ats. I hope that the representatives present here to-day will move their Jama'ats to share in this appeal.

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"WHO WILL BE MY HELPERS TOWARDS GOD?"

Amir-ul-Momineen's Call

Amir-ul-Momineen Hazrat Khalifatulmasih, in a signed message to the Jama'at, says :—

(1) A month has elapsed since the promulgation of the *Tahrik-i-Jadid* for the fourth year. Have you done your bit during this time?

(2) 31st January is the last date for receiving promises; no promise will be accepted after that date, except from places specifically excepted.

(3) The believer avails of the earliest opportunity of doing good. So, do not wait till the 31st. The earlier the promise the greater will be the reward.

(4) December 1 is the last date for Indian Jama'ats by which their promises must be redeemed; but, the sooner one redeems one's promise the greater will be one's reward, except that a man be really unable to do so in the eyes of God.

(5) Early collection will make for greater benefit to the Faith.

(6) The contributions no doubt are voluntary; but it is the *voluntary* help which is of greater merit.

(7) Islam and Ahmadiyyat are surrounded by the entire force of the enemy. They demand every possible sacrifice from you. There must be an obvious distinction between the "Sons of Light" and the "Sons of Darkness."

(8) The present *Tahrik* must be communicated to every Ahmadi; if you pass on the *Tahrik* to others and thus move them to take a share in it, this too would be a meritorious act on your part. If a man shares, or takes a *larger* share, in the *Tahrik* on your move, you will be an equal sharer in the reward with him.

(9) God does not need the help of man; He accomplishes His Works by Himself. But, blessed is he about whom God says: "his hands are My Hands!" for, he becomes an heir to His Grace and His Mercy.

(10) Individuals and Jama'ats against whom there stand any arrears of the 3rd year of the *Tahrik-i-Jadid* should give their attention to the payment of such arrears at once.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Annual Gathering of the Ahmadiyya Community

The Annual Gathering of the Ahmadiyya community was held as usual in the last week of December—on December 26th, 27th, 28th. This Gathering of the Ahmadis in the Christmas week is a great event in the history of the Ahmadiyya community. Thousands of Ahmadis come every year from every part of India, sometimes from some foreign countries as well to pay their respects and to listen to the soul-stirring sermons of their spiritual Leader and Guide and also to refresh and strengthen their faith by visiting the place where God's Glory and Majesty was manifested in the person of the Founder of their Movement. From a small meeting of not more than 300 Ahmadis and sympathisers in 1892 when its foundations were laid, it has grown and developed into a great institution. The number of Ahmadis who visit Qadian on this occasion always exceeds that of the previous year. This year it approximated to 30,000.

The Gathering was held in a vast *pandal* fitted with loud speakers in the spacious grounds of the Talim-ul-Islam High School. After a recitation from the Holy Quran the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad gave his inaugural address in which he recalled the humble origin of the Annual Gathering and its rise into an institution which attracted people from all parts of the world. The cosmopolitan character of the audience, he said, bore testimony to its increasing popularity. He exhorted his followers to have an unfailing faith in the truth of their mission and let no spirit of defeatism warp their determination. A nation or community would begin to lose its vitality, if it began to distrust its own energies. A robust faith in its destiny combined with sacrifices and sufferings, he added, make a nation great. United front of opponents and other trials and tribulations only go to tone up the vitality and moral calibre of a community which believed that it had a great mission to fulfil.

Maulvi A. R. Nayyar gave a lecture on "the history and progress of the Ahmadiyya Movement" and Professor Muhammad Aslam, B. A. (Cantab.) on "the problem of pain and the existence of a moral order in the universe." In the evening of 26th December, Sir Mohammed Zafrullah

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Khan, K.C.S.I., Commerce Member of the Government of India in a speech on the responsibilities of Ahmadiyya Youth exhorted young Ahmadis to train and equip themselves intellectually and physically for the battle of life first, by fully understanding what their Movement stood for ; secondly by living clean, healthy lives. Truthfulness, uprightness, punctuality, respect for law and authority, faithfulness to one's obligations, and above all a realization of the importance of time, he said, were some of the qualities badly in need of being cultivated by Ahmadi youngmen. Time, he added, was God's most precious gift to man—more precious than light and air. It was the breath of life and should not be wasted light-heartedly.

In his address on the afternoon of 27th December, Hazrat Amir-ul-Momineen made a survey of the conditions through which the Ahmadiyya community passed in the last year, difficulties it had to contend and the successes that attended its missionary activities. There was hardly a country of note in the East or West, he said, in which Ahmadiyya missionaries were not working and especially referred to the opening of new missions in Poland, Yugoslavia and South America during the last year. Exhorting his followers to re-double their efforts to carry the torch of Islam to the farthest ends of the earth, he said, the press was a principal instrument for the dissemination of their teachings and for keeping individual Ahmadis attached to the centre inasmuch as law of collective life was at work in the realm of higher animal life and an Ahmadi detached from the centre of the Ahmadiyya organisation was like a severed limb threatened with extinction. Hazrat Sahib then made a sorrowful reference to the persecution and harassment that the Ahmadiyya community had met at the hands of some officials of the Government whom they had so loyally and selflessly served for so many years. No amount of persecution, he said, could make them take the law into their hands and disturb the peace of the country, but Ahmadis would naturally withhold co-operation from the Government which persecuted them. He believed by lawful and constitutional methods they could compel the Government to redress their wrongs.

Adverting to the much-discussed question whether Ahmadis would join the Muslim League or the Congress, he said, he had come to no final decision. The Muslim League had spurned Ahmadiyya co-operation and he had some fundamental differences with the Congress programmes and methods. To a Muslim the freedom of religious preaching and conversion was the breath of life and Congress

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had failed to give satisfaction regarding this question of all questions. He said he was in no hurry to ally with any political organisation, but he had to decide this question finally in no distant future. Towards the end of 4½ hours' speech with kept the audience spell-bound he traced the history of early dissensions in Islam and demonstrated striking resemblances between seceders in time of early Muslim Caliphs and those in his own time. He advised his followers to ignore mischief-makers and continue their work with increasing zeal and vigour.

Hazrat Sahib's third day's address on the excellences of the Holy Quran was a veritable treasure house of spiritual knowledge. So interesting, instructive and informative was the lecture that it kept the whole audience spell-bound for full six hours. In the course of his great speech he dealt with the spiritual and intellectual evolution of mankind and described briefly the different phases through which mankind had passed during the ages. He observed that all great intellectual and religious movements that had left their permanent imprint had a new message to give and had a revolutionary urge behind it to make it successful. Mankind was indebted for all progress to these two factors. Then he divided the intellectual development of mankind roughly into five eras, namely, Aryan, Roman, Iranian, Babylonian and western materialism. These movements, he said, long survived those empires that gave them strength because they gave the world new ideals and created a revolutionary mentality. Aryanism gave the world a philosophy of life based on principles of eugenics of which Hindu doctrine of transmigration of soul was the direct result. Romanism stood for respect for law and admitted its authority in all spheres of human society. Iranian movement gave a new form to polity and ethics and created the idea of duality of Godhood. Babylonians developed chemistry, astronomy, architecture and westernism, he said, gave birth to nationalism. It has engendered material outlook and national discrimination and destroyed the belief in after life, concentrating on grabing, grasping and multiplication of wants. Corresponding to these five eras in man's intellectual development, he proceeded, were seven spiritual cycles. The Cycle of Adam may be called the cycle of the birth of human civilization because in that cycle man learned to behave and live as a social being. Noah's Cycle witnessed the realization by man of God's attributes. In Patriarch Abraham's Cycle man learned to respect the dignity and sanctity of human life. In Moses' Cycle a more or less complete code of

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divine laws was vouchsafed to man and in Jesus' Cycle great emphasis was laid on the spiritual interpretation of the Mosaic teachings. In the Cycle of Muhammad, the bearer of God's last message to mankind, the divine law became complete in its minutest detail and the foundations of human brotherhood were laid. The last cycle through which we are passing is Ahmad's Cycle and it may be termed as the spiritual return of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is only a very brief and incomplete outline of our Master's great speech on the evening of the 28th December. If ever the speech was published, the world shall see what great fountains of spiritual knowledge are caused to flow from Qadian. Towards the end of his six hour's speech the Hazrat Sahib made a stirring appeal and exhorted his followers to develop a creative attitude of mind which was essential for bringing about a new social order and to serve their fellow-beings even with their lives.

Maulvi Ghulam Rasul, Rajeki, Maulvi Abul Ata, Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, Malik Abdur Rahman Khadim and several other speakers also addressed the vast audience on various social, moral and spiritual subjects. The arrangement to house and feed these 30,000 Ahmadis was in the hands of Mir Muhammad Ishaq. Considering the extreme inclemency of the weather it was generally satisfactory. A separate *jalsa* of ladies was also held and among others was addressed also by Hazrat Amir-ul-Momineen.

A Plea for Polygamy

In an exclusive interview which he granted to George Sylvester Viereck some time ago and which this great writer published in his world-renowned book, *Glimpses of the Great*, George Bernard Shaw on being asked "Do you advocate monogamy", answered,

> "Monogamy is imposed by the economy of nature, which more or less equalizes the birth-rate of the two sexes. If a war upsets it, you would have polygamy without question in ten minutes. The Mormons were the most narrowly strait-laced monogamic moralists on earth, but when they had either to multiply rapidly or be wiped out by their persecutors in Missouri, they were almost instantaneously converted to polygamy, in spite of their horror when their prophet first broached it to them."

Europe is slowly but steadily and surely becoming convinced of the wisdom and sanity of the Islamic teaching. Till very recently the Islamic institution of polygamy was very severely

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world to-day. Further, from this great verity four other mighty truths follow as natural corollaries.

I

God's All-Providence

It is a fact, as has already been mentioned—a fact which is nowhere disputed—that previous to the coming of Islam as the universal religion for all mankind, every people, no matter in what part of the world, had from time to time a divine Teacher raised among them. The Holy Quran, the latest existing revelation of God, testifies to this fact in these words: "There has not been a people but an Admonisher has passed among them" (Chap. 35, v. 34). Now here the question naturally arises: If in the pre-Islamic world, for the spiritual regeneration, growth and development of mankind, God used to send His inspired Teachers in every age and clime, has He not provided in Islam any analogous means for the spiritual regeneration of the Muslims? Any opinion which denies the existence of a like arrangement among the followers of Islam is utterly inconsistent with the All-providence of God as declared in the Holy Quran. Being the Creator and Sustainer of the whole human race, it is necessary that God should provide in every age for the spiritual needs of His creatures, exactly as He provides for their physical needs. It will not do at all to assert that among the Muslims the *ulema*, that is, the savants of Islam, answer the purpose of such guides and teachers; for concerning the *ulema* of our day the prophecy of the Holy Prophet clearly states that they would be the worst class of people then in existence, and that, far from exercising any reformative and unifying influence upon the

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denounced by the public men and publicists in the West. Even now an average Westerner thinks polygamy can hardly be justified on any ground. The permission to be able to marry more than one wife, according to him, inclines man's mind to sensuality and degrades the status of women. But now that a man of Bernard Shaw's prestige and authority has declared polygamy to be justifiable on some grounds, a great change, we hope, would come over the mind of the West regarding this very sane, useful, and in some cases, quite essential, even indispensable institution of Islam. If the people of the West and those in our own and some other Eastern countries who have given their souls in bondage to the Occident should seriously ponder over the aims and objects of the marriage itself, the permission of the Quran to its followers to wed, under certain circumstances, more than one wife, would appear to be not only justifiable but in some cases to be highly desirable and even extremely necessary and not to avail of it highly immoral and injurious for the best interests of individuals and also for those of the society as a whole. The Quran describes the object of marriage as (1) protection against physical, moral and spiritual maladies, (2) peace and contentment of the mind, and the company of a life-long, loyal and loving companion, (3) procreation of children and (4) extension of blood relations. And the objects of polygamous marriages are the same as those of monogamous marriages. It is not very difficult to understand that these objects are, sometimes, not realized in a single marriage. It is to meet the exigencies of these few cases that Islam has allowed polygamous marriages. There are, however, other reasons which sometime render it necessary, even indispensable and highly moral and spiritual for a person to have one or more wives in addition to the one whom he dearly loves and who even fulfils one or all the above-mentioned objects of marriage. Those reasons are : (*a*) protection of orphans, (*b*) providing husbands for young widows in case of a war and (*c*) to supplement the decreasing and dilapidated manhood of a family, a community or a country. The Great War fully vindicated this very useful institution of Islam and in view of the social conditions in the Western countries we are quite convinced that before long Christendom shall have to adopt polygamy in order to save its society from moral bankruptcy towards which, according to some very well-known writers, it is rushing headlong.

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Muslims, they would lead them still farther astray from Islam, and disunite them into an endless number of warring factions. All this we find has come to pass exactly as had been foretold by the great Founder of Islam. Without the least scruple or compunction these so-called *ulema* of our day have issued *fatwas* and counter-*fatwas* declaring as *kafirs*, or infidels, all such as happen to hold views different in any way from their own on any religious question. Can such people, who themselves stand in sore need of being reformed, be a fitting instrumentality through which God's attribute of All-providence can find its expression? Indeed not. The agency through which it was to work was to be none other than that referred to by the Holy Prophet himself; namely, the personality of the special spiritual Guide whose advent had been appointed to mark the beginning of every new century in the history of the holy religion of Islam. This fact constitutes a glorious miracle of Islam, and an irrefragable proof of its truth, which even the blindest prejudice will struggle in vain to resist. It behoves everyone claiming to be a Muslim not only himself to accept this wonderful miracle, but also to exert his utmost endeavour to give it a wide dissemination, and bring others to believe in it, so that God's All-providence may find its fullest manifestation in the world, redounding to the benefit of all mankind.

II

A Great Proof of the Holy Prophet's Truth

The second great verity lies in the proof which the foregoing miracle supplies as to the truth and greatness of the Holy Prophet of Islam, who made the wonderful prophecy relating to the appearance of an

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inspired Teacher among the Muslims after the expiration of every hundred years. God has, in accordance with His divine law, drawn a thick veil over the future, which no mortal eye can penetrate. It is only His holy messengers and prophets to whom He vouchsafes what knowledge He deems fit and necessary respecting certain important future events. That the Holy Prophet of Islam—may peace and blessings of Allah be ever upon him—should be able to make an important prediction of this nature, which has ever since met with a uniform and unfailing fulfilment every hundred years down to this day, and will similarly go on being fulfilled to the end of the world, is by no means a small matter. It affords beyond all refutation the most striking evidence of the truth of the Holy Founder of Islam.

III

Islam's Superiority Over Other Faiths

In the third place, the same miracle serves to prove the incontestable superiority of Islam over all other religions of the world; for while before the coming of Islam every religion was marked by the periodical appearance of inspired Teachers among its followers, since its advent this characteristic feature has completely disappeared from all rival faiths and creeds, so that for upwards of a thousand years now they have not witnessed the appearance of a divine messenger or Teacher among their adherents. God may be praised that in the case of Islam, ever since it came into the world, inspired Teachers and Guides have always appeared among the Muslims, and will continue to appear as long as the world endures. Can there be a greater proof than this of the divine origin of Islam,

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and of its being at the present time the only true living religion in the world?

IV

God's Great Blessing Upon Muslims

The fourth great truth of Islam consists in the wonderful blessing which God has conferred upon the Muslims of all times and ages. Addressing them, He says in the Holy Quran: "Lay ye all a firm hold of Allah's CORD OF UNITY, and create no discord among yourselves" (Chap. 3, v. 103). So long as the Maslims acted upon this golden injunction they were on the pinnacle of glory and greatness. In course of time, however, they gradually lost sight of the divine commandment given to them, with the result that one finds them to-day torn and sundered into innumerable sects, all of them being at daggers drawn one with another. Paying no heed to the warning of the Holy Prophet relating to the present fateful disruption of the solidarity of Islam—which states that of all the mutually antagonistic sects in Islam at this time only one would be truly Muslim and will find salvation, while the rest, having nothing of Islam in them, would all be doomed to perdition on the Day of Judgment—the followers of each sect, under the baneful influence of their so-called *ulema*, are steering their own wrong and wilful course, steeped in all manner of rank hetrodoxy of belief and practice, and wedded to a thousand and one customs flagrantly opposed to the pure monotheism of Islam. Thus, with their own hands they are working their spiritual destruction—theirs as well as that of their wives and children, for both these latter, being under their guidance and control, cannot but follow in their footsteps. Altogether, their situation is one of such utter

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hopelessness that no means, except those emanating from a divine source, can possibly avail to extricate them from the hopeless flounderings in which they are involved, and effect their regeneration. So foreseeing all this, the providence and the mercy of God promulgated the law referred to above; namely, that every hundred years a spiritual reformer should appear in Islam, so that he might renew the faith of the Muslims, restore them to true doctrine and practice, and knit them together once more into the true and unique brotherhood of Islam, which transcends all barriers of clime, colour and nationality. In making this spiritual provision for the Muslims God has conferred upon them a rare blessing, a blessing which they cannot value enough, and for which they should return abundant thanks to God, and from which they should try to derive the highest possible benefit.

A centennial reformer in Islam has four characteristic marks: (1) He comes with divine authority and possesses the gift of Revelation; (2) he appears right at the dawn of every ensuing century, according to the Islamic era; (3) he comes with a message addressed to the whole world of Islam, and (4) he expounds true Islam, as based on the authority of the Holy Quran, and supported by the authentic Tradition and Practice of the Holy Prophet.

As regards the present century, which occurs towards the closing days of the world, God had decided to raise in it a PREMIER REFORMER bearing, as the prophecies of the Holy Prophet say, the name of the *Promised Messiah*, and possessing the rank and title of a *prophet*.

Now, who is this blessed reformer? Who is this promised Guide and Imam of the age? Answering the conditions we have just given, one, and only one, person has made his appearance—Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, may the choicest favours and blessings of God be upon him for ever and ever. Besides him, not only no reformer has appeared anywhere in all the world, there has not been even a single rival claimant to dispute his truth—a fact so well established and so ungainsayable that we even recently issued a challenge in different languages offering ***a prize of ten thousand rupees*** to anyone who should disprove it, but no one could come forward to do so. Nor can any other person now in future appear for this century, for the period during which one could come, that is, the beginning of the century, has long gone by. From all this it follows beyond a shadow of doubt that the Messiah, the Saviour, the Great Reformer of the age, whose advent the world had been promised, and whom it has been awaiting with such breathless eagerness, has appeared—and it is none other than Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian.

He did great work. He wrote well over eighty books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu—each of them a classic and masterly production—and established the glory of God, the truth and superiority of Islam over all other faiths of the world, and the truth and unrivalled greatness of the Founder of Islam. After his death, which occurred in 1908, his followers are now carrying on the work of the propagation of Islam, and of conveying the message of the Master to the people in all parts of the world. Seeing the great work which the Ahmadiyya community is doing in the service of Islam, many people now freely admit and declare that